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## **SEA TURTLE CENTER INVOLVED IN TWO PROTECTION PROJECTS**

Two projects to preserve sea turtles from harm are underway with help from the Sea Turtle Center.

At a capture/release sea turtle project in Bahia de los Angeles, Baja, Mexican marine biologist Antonio Resendiz supervises the care of some 40 of the big creatures including Pacific Green, Pacific Hawksbill, and Loggerheads.

In addition to raising individuals to release size, the project on the Sea of Cortez provides beach protection during the laying season. Turtle eggs are popular with poachers who raid the nests and sell the eggs in Mexico City bars where they are thought to increase sexual potency.

Laura Sarti of the University of Mexico directs a project in a major Leatherback turtle nesting area on the beaches of Michoacan. She and college student volunteers protect the eggs at nesting time by camping on the beaches. Before they started, 90 percent of the sea turtle eggs laid on Michoacan beaches were stolen for the black market. Now less than 40 percent are taken.

In addition to providing protection and affording study opportunities, these two projects provide ways to create environmental and education programs involving local residents.

The Sea Turtle Center was formed as an international non-profit, membership supported organization. We exist to support projects that protect and preserve the great creatures. An important part of our mission is informing the general public of the plight of sea turtles through educational materials, a newsletter, slide shows, and media appearances.

MICHAEL RUGGE, Director, Sea Turtle Center, P.O. Box 634, Nevada City, CA 95959 USA.

## **STOCKPILING SEA TURTLE CARCASSES**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Fisheries Center (SEFC), Galveston Laboratory and its collaborators in Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) are collecting and necropsying hundreds of carcasses of sea turtles of a variety of species found stranded on beaches bordering the northwest Gulf of Mexico. Current protocols call for incineration or burial of the remains, but this seems a shameful waste of potentially valuable materials that could be stockpiled and curated for future scientific and educational uses.

Stockpiling of sea turtle carcasses requires a remote site (due to the stench of rotting carcasses), adequate security (e.g. chain link fence enclosure with appropriate signs and warnings), proper labeling and bagging of the carcasses to keep the skeletons intact, and containers with covers to protect the carcasses from rodents and weather. Frozen storage is feasible but more costly and limited in capacity than enclosures.

Museums, universities, taxonomists, etc. are hereby alerted regarding availability of sea turtle carcasses. Those interested in receiving specimens and arranging for their transfer should contact: Marcel J. Duronslet, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Center, Galveston Laboratory, 4700 Avenue U, Galveston, TX 77551-5997 USA; telephone (409) 766-3516. Permitting authorities must be notified by potential recipients prior to transfers of specimens, to assure that proper procedures are followed. International transfer will require a CITES permit.

Among the groups we have contacted so far are the Smithsonian Institution, the University of Texas at Arlington, and Texas A&M University, and we have transferred limited numbers of specimens to each. However, interest in such specimens may be more widespread, but here-to-fore the availability of specimens has not been widely known.

The purpose of this notice is to alert those potentially interested in the specimens. Cost of packing, shipping, etc. must be borne by the recipient. Recipients also must arrange for all necessary permits.

The following are some potential uses for sea turtle carcasses:

(1) display of curated and articulated skeletons or bones; (2) studies of pollutant accumulation (e.g. heavy metals) in bones; (3) age-growth studies; (4) taxonomic studies; (5) pathological studies of injuries or mutilation of turtles as shown by skull and bones.

CHARLES W. CAILLOUET, Jr. and MARCEL J. DURONSLET, NMFS, SEFC, Galveston Laboratory, Galveston, TX 7751-5997 USA; ANDRE M. LANDRY, Jr., and ERICH K. STABENAU, Department of Marine Biology, Texas A&M University, Galveston, TX 77553 USA.

## **WHO HAS TAGGED MEDITERRANEAN LOGGERHEAD?**

A loggerhead turtle with the tag number B243 was captured on the Maltese Islands and the data passed over to me. The tag was reported as being made of plastic. Details can be obtained by contacting me.

DIETER GRAMENTZ, Folderichstr. 7, D-1000 Berlin 20, Federal Republik of Germany

## **FREE PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE KEMP'S RIDLEY SEA TURTLE PROJECT REPORTS AVAILABLE**

The international multi-agency program to restore and enhance the critically endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtle population began in 1978. Since then the National Park Service personnel at Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS) have incubated approximately 2000 eggs per year received from Rancho Nuevo, Mexico in an attempt to establish a secondary breeding population of this species. Hatchlings have been released on the beach at PAIS, recaptured using aquarium dip nets, and sent to the National Marine Fisheries Service Laboratory at Galveston, Texas for one year of head starting. Final yearly reports detailing the project at the National Seashore have been prepared since 1982. A limited number of copies of the 1985, 1986, and 1987 reports are available free of charge. Interested persons may obtain a copy of any or all of these reports by writing to: Donna J. Shaver, Padre Island National Seashore, 9405 S. Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78418-5597 USA. Please specify the year(s) desired.

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